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Small Business Innovation Research Grants Fuel Technology, Bring Jobs to Upstate New York

WASHINGTON, DC -Today**,** U.S. Rep. Michael Arcuri (NY-24) announced that the U.S. Department of Education has awarded Ithaca, NY based NovaSpeech LLC a $75,000 Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Grant.

This grant will allow NovaSpeech to demonstrate the feasibility of a novel text-to-speech synthesis system that promises to provide speech-impared individuals with more natural-sounding, mimetic, and individualized voices, at a substantially lower cost than is currently possible.

"Small businesses are the backbone of our economy and I am committed to making sure we do everything we can at the national level to provide them with the resources they need to succeed," **said Arcuri**. "SBIR provides new innovation and research resources - bringing small businesses into the forefront of technological innovation. Across Upstate New York, small businesses are loyal partners in our communities and I will do all I can in Congress to support them."

The Small Business Innovation Research program is the Federal government's largest small business research and development program. The SBIR Program expands and improves private sector participation in biomedical research. The program intends to increase and facilitate private sector commercialization of innovations derived from Federal research and development; to increase small business participation in Federal research and development; and to foster and encourage participation of socially and economically disadvantaged small business concerns and women-owned small business concerns in technological innovation.

NovaSpeech LLC was founded in 2004 for the purpose of developing next-generation speech technologies and related educational materials. The company is headed by Dr. Susan Hertz .

Building on linguistic and perceptual speech models developed by Dr. Hertz and her collaborators over some thirty years, NovaSpeech is currently developing exciting new cutting-edge technologies for speech synthesis. In the longer term, NovaSpeech plans to apply their powerful models to improve other areas of speech processing as well, including speech encoding, automated speech analysis, speech recognition, and speech splicing.

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